

## I. The Model Church, 1:1-3:13

A. A Strong Church: 1:1-4

B. A Strong Conversion: 1:5-10

C. A Strong Clergy: 2:1-12

D. A Strong Congregation: 2:13-20

E. A Strong Conviction: 3:1-10

F. A Strong Concern or Love for Each other:

### Text: 3:9-13

We measure our spiritual growth in so many ways.  
Dress, music, movies, entertainment  
I will refer to a church as Right/Left of us.

These verses deal with the true measure of Spiritual growth: Love for others.

**Lesson Aim:** To Strive for Selfless Love & to see the Results of Selfless love:

The greatest Crime in the world is when christians refuse to love one another.

If we would spend as much time striving to love each other as we do picking each other apart, the church and world would be radically changed for eternity.

***When you think of others, do you think in terms of loving them?***

This is a strong indicator of your love for God.

***Is there a line, where of someone falls outside of it, they do not deserve to be loved by you or by God?***

Is God's love only reserved for the Lovely, or easy to love?

Is God's love limited scope? (Jn 3:16) *Everybody in the world*

It is God's love that is make us distinctive from the people of the world.

Love for others is the one thing we must have to have the abundant Christian life.

W/o love, man is nothing. Paul knew this.

Paul prayed that they might grow more and more in love.

***Selfless Love gives us...***

**I. Joy In Others: (Vs 9)**

outward visible joy

How do you know that you are growing as a Christian?

When you see others grow, you experience joy.

It's about them!

It's about others!

Vs 9, Paul repeats himself: Joy: Joy

Joy that is in his heart for other people.

Do you get excited when others grow?

Do we even notice?

We are so consumed with our own lives.

Even in our trials, if we work out at others we can have joy as we see God working in their lives.

We can joy before our God for all He is doing in others. It is a pure emotion because it has nothing to do with self.

The true measurement of my love is whether or not I can rejoice in the good fortune that others experience all the while my life seems to be falling apart.

3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Point: inexpressible joy is only possible to the degree in which we grow in selfless love for others.

How do we accomplish this?  
It begins with renewing the mind.  
Repent of self love.  
Crying out to God in prayer.

Applying these to our relationship.  
Relationships is the proving ground of selfless love.

*Selfless Love gives us...*

## **II. Thanksgiving for others: (Vs 9)**

Thanksgiving is the Hallmark of godly men and women.

Colossians 3:16 KJV

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.  
(1 Thes 5:16)

When we see what God has done, what is doing, and will do, we realize “I am so blessed“the natural outgrowth is Thanksgiving.

Paul does not attribute the Thessalonians steadfastness to his own ministry or two is on teaching or to their own character, but to God.

Do you believe, that when you are walking on streets of gold in heaven, that we are actually going to be discussing what we accomplished on earth? No! It's going to be all a conversation about how awesome God is, and how good God is, and how his mercy endures forever.

Instead of Paul taking credit for his efforts in ministering to the Thessalonians, he attributes their steadfastness to the work of God.

When we take the credit for what God is doing in others, we are somehow expecting the praise to be redirected to us rather than to God.

Or God and you as if you are in some symbiotic relationship where we somehow complete Gods efforts.

(Ps 115:1)

“On your Account”

“Your“ is Plearle, so he is thankful for all of them. Not just the ones that are productive, but the ones that are broken, or awful, or distracted, all of them.

*Selfless Love spurs us to ...*

### **III. Prayer On Behalf of Others: (Vs 10)**

We see the Paul’s Emphasis on Prayer.

*“Night and day praying exceedingly”*

Prayer was like breathing for Paul.

It was his manner to be in prayer all day.

Thanksgiving is Us Ministering to God.

Think of Heaven: Worshipping and Praising God!

They are Ministering to God in Heaven.

Prayer is Asking: *I don’t like to ask God for things.*

Because they know how unworthy we all are.

But...

(Ps 81:10) *I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

He created us, He saved us, He wants us to Ask.

(Rom 8:32) *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

**“Night and day praying exceedingly”**

Ask and Keep Asking!

Spurgeon called it a Checkbook that is already made out to you, waiting for us to filling the amount!

God has not been exhausted by our prayer!

Don’t be content in prayer!

Don’t Stop Praying!

Don’t Stop Believing Him for all things in Prayer.

**A. Recognize our inability:** We Have to Have HIM!

*Believe what the bible says...*

(Jn 6:63) *the flesh profiteth nothing:*

(Jn 15:5) *for without me ye can do nothing.*

**B. Recognize the Power of Prayer:**

The lie of the devil: answered prayer is not for us!

That was OT, or That was the Apostles...

*Illus: George Muller fed 10K orphans,*

*& Started 117 schools All by prayer!*

**C. Discipline Ourselves to a Set Time to Prayer:**

Disciplining ourselves to meet with God.

The Flesh hates Bible Study, but more so prayer.

There is no Boast available to the flesh in prayer.

(Vs 10) *that we might see your face,*  
Paul desires to fellowship with believers.

*Illus: What excuse do you hear as to why people are not in church? Busy, something came up?*

*When was the last time you heard...I have run out of people to fellowship with & be a blessing too that I need to find another church?*

Our neglect of encouraging the people of God is a reflection of our lack of Selfless Love toward them.

(Vs 10) *that we might see your face,*  
Why does Paul want to see their face?  
Because he loves them and is concerned for them.  
Paul prays: *"I want to see your face"*

(Vs 10) *and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?*

Paul's Selfless love for them was a desire to minister to them and their needs, not for personal gratification.  
(Heb 10:24-25) We need to not only encourage during the services and fellowship, but let the fellowship continue into lunch.

Use Sundays to Minister to others!

### **1. Vs 11 The Great Prayer of Paul:**

*Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.*

Paul prays to the Father and Jesus Christ, thus revealing who God is and Christ is.

The Deity of Christ is throughout Scripture.

A. Paul prays to God for himself: *"direct OUR way"*

Some people only see God as

- The supreme majestic, all powerful being, seated in heaven.
- Above and Removed far from our lives & problems.

Paul is saying that God is much more than that.

He is our Father!

God is a Father close at hand.

God the Father is Actively participating in the lives of His children.

B. Paul prays to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The one who loved us enough to come to earth and die for us.

He prays to the Messiah and Promised Son.

Both the Father and the Son, co-existing equally for all eternity.

Paul asked that the Father and the Son guide him as he ministered to the believers in Thessalonica.

Paul wanted God the Father and the Lord Jesus to open the door for his return to Thessalonica.

***What are the key components you noticed in Paul's Prayer?***

***How would you use this as a guide to your own personal prayer time?***

***How would you rate your own personal prayer life?***

***Is it alive and Active & Growing?***

***Is it half hearted, dying, & Sporadic?***

***Is it dead altogether?***

***How much time and effort is spent on other people vs. your own self?***

## **2. Vs 12 The Great Need of Love:**

***12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:***

This is the Supreme need for every believer:

The need to grow in Love.

***To Increase***~To grow, abound - more & more.

***To Abound*** ~ Excell in Overflow.

The Love that we need to grow in is the kind that causes us to love ALL men, not just one another.

*"And Toward All Men"*

This love is the love that reaches out to the unlovely.

The Orphan, sick, infirm, that can not pay us back.

The enemy, the oppressor, the dictator, filthy, spiteful, hateful etc.

***How can we love people like this?***

People who deceive us, cheat us, abuse us, etc.  
***Is it even humanly possible? NO!***

Only the Love we have FROM God can love people like this.

***The Source of this Love is the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Agape Love - The Great Love of God.

This love is to flow from us unto all people, no matter who they are.

(Matt 22:39) *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

***Are you in touch with the source of this kind of love?***

***Are you walking with Jesus so as to embody this kind of Love?***

***The Best way to understand Agape love is to contrast it with what it is not!***

**Eros-Passionate Love -**

Base love of a man arising from his own inner passion

The drive for Power and Fame.

Not used in the New Testament.

**Storge-Effectionate Love -**

The kind of love between parent and Child.

Between Loyal citizens & their governmental leader.

Not used in the NT.

**Phileo-Enduring Love -**

Husband and Wife, Brother to Brother.  
Friend for the dearest of Friends.

**Agape-Unselfish Love** - Love that does not matter whether someone deserves it or not.

A. **Selfless Love** = The very Love of God himself.  
Love Demonstrated at Cross of Calvary.  
Love for the Ungodly: (Rom 5:6)  
Love for Unworthy Sinners: (Rom 5:8)  
Love for Undeserving Enemies: (Rom 5:10)

B. **A Gift of God**: Can only be experienced by knowing God personally.  
Only if a person has received the Love of God at Salvation.  
Poured out or Shed abroad: (Rom 5:5)

C. **The Greatest thing of all in life.** (Mark 12:29-31)

D. **The Greatest Possession in Human life:**  
(1 Cor 13:1-13) \*13  
It is the Love of God that binds us together as a body of believers.

In the church, every member of the body has a very special part to play in building up the church.

Dr. Halbeck, missionary to South Africa noted in his journal.

2 Lepers working together.

1 with no hands; 1 with no feet.

The one with no hands carried the 1 with no feet.

Every step, the one with hands dropped a pea onto the ground so the one with the feet could gently press it into the soil to complete the sowing process.

***This is a great Illustration of the church.***

All of us, ravaged by sin, can play a part in sowing seeds for the master if we will just work together.

The Same should be true of every NT church.  
(1 Cor 12:25) *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

The Love of God will produce Unity. People working as one.

***Are you working as an Individual or part of a Team?  
Which of these 4 types of love is Easiest for you to demonstrate?***

***Which of these 4 types of Love is the Hardest for you to love?***

***Why is it important for Believers to Demonstrate Agape Love?***

***How can we Demonstrate Agape love in our Daily Lives?***

***Where do you see the best Demonstration of Agape Love?***

***The Great Result of Selfless Love...***

**IV. Ministry to Others: Vs 13**

***13 To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.***

Establish~ prop, support, make fast.

It is Jesus who Establishes our hearts.

Unblameable~ Free from all charges, Fault or Blame.

Jesus alone has the power to present us

Faultless before the Throne of God.

Holiness~

***When is this Glorious presentation planned to happen?***

***“at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”***

When Christ returns, Christ will present all believers to the Father!

The Bible says this Day WILL take place!

It is the promise of God Himself.

It will not be stopped.

All men should Prepare for His return (Jn 14:2-3)

Jesus said He is Coming Back.

***Can you imagine that day?***

***Can you imagine what life will be like when Christ Returns?***

Sometimes we get too busy and we forget that Jesus is away, preparing a place for us.

When He comes, We Shall Be Changed!

Illus: CH. Spurgeon was given a Commentary on Leviticus from Dr. Barnhart.

Spurgeon thoroughly enjoyed it.

He sent it back to the Author requesting an autograph and a Photograph.

Dr. Barnhart complied, and wrote a little note.

I hope you enjoy this book, but if you had been content to wait a little while, Christ will

return and I will have a better picture to offer you! For I shall be Changed!

***Why did God keep you on earth once He saved you?***

***How are you preparing yourself to meet God face to Face?***

***When you think of being like Jesus, what areas of your life need more work?***

***Which of those Areas are you working on?***

***If Jesus were to Return today, would you be ready?***

***How would you know you are ready?***

***What are you basing your hope on?***

*How strong is your love? Is it growing  
Stronger and Stronger?*

*Does it reach out to all Men?*

*It is God's way to prepare us to be presented  
before Him!x*